



ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21

During our 11th year of operations the Covid-19 pandemic again had a significant effect on our service, the school closures during the second major lockdown from January to March 2021 causing us to operate a reduced commuter-only service for a period of 3 months. We placed our employee Paul Bancroft on furlough until we were able to resume our services in the middle of March and continued with a series of strict protocols to protect our drivers and passengers from the virus.

I would like to thank the members of the committee who helped to prepare the minibus for its return to service during the pandemic, giving the vehicle a 'deep clean', sourcing the necessary masks, hand sanitizer and cleaning equipment, sorting out the seating plans for school children to ensure social distancing and to Paul for installing the perspex screen between the front and rear cabins.

As a result of the 3 months suspension of school services during the first lockdown the total number of passenger journeys in 2021 rose to 4853 from 3646 (compared to 2019's 'normal' total of 6346).

We operate our service under a 'Section 19' permit from Bath & Northeast Somerset Council. This allows us to provide community transport to Wellow parishioners including school children studying at St. Greg's, Beechen Cliff, and Hayesfield, with an afternoon pick-up from King Edward's School.

Thanks to a generous grant from Wellow Parish Council we are able to offer free transport to older parishioners who hold a Diamond Bus Pass. It is important to stress that we are not just a 'school bus' and that there are seats available for commuters and shoppers on both morning and evening runs into Bath..

Now that the lockdowns are hopefully in the past we are keen to re-start the opportunity for parishioners and local groups to use the bus for their trips and functions at a cost of £30 plus £1 per additional mile. Prakriti is your contact for booking the bus for your group and she is also keen to hear your ideas for any special trips you would like us to organize.

The maintenance of our minibus and the safety of our passengers is our highest priority and our statutory 10 week safety checks as well as the routine services and annual MOT are carried out by the B&NES workshops at Locksbrook Road in Bath.

Our scheduled services were driven during the year mainly by our professional driver Paul Bancroft, with Stefan Chauveau providing important holiday and sickness cover. and our thanks go to both for their driving skill, reliability and friendly treatment of our passengers

We would like to thank all our volunteer drivers for being available to provide occasional cover for our professional drivers. All our drivers receive 3-yearly tests from B&NES driving instructors to ensure that their skills and knowledge are in good shape. We welcomed 2 new volunteers in 2021, Lucy Pearman and Tom Jones and we took the opportunity to re-new the DBS certification of all our drivers.

I would like to express our gratitude to our sponsors and supporters Bath Audi, Cobb Farr, The Fox & Badger, The White Hart, and our new sponsor King Edward's School. Our financial structure also depends upon the grants we receive from Wellow Parish Council and the WECA regional authority. Without their support we would not be able to provide this important service to our community.

A special thank you is due to Matt Small of Berkeley Hall Marshall who provides our statutory accounts free of charge for submission to Companies House, HMRC and the Charities Commission.

My thanks go to the trustees and committee members who served during this year, to Christina, Prakriti, Lucy and to our long serving Treasurer, Geoff who manages to keep our accounts in order, often from a distance of 2,000 miles in Malta.

Finally we also thank our loyal passengers for patronising our Community Bus and hope very much that our service is appreciated. We plan to carry out a survey of parishioners later this year in order to measure levels of customer satisfaction and to understand how our service could be improved.

Mike Clarkson
Chairman
Wellow Community Bus Group

7 May 2022